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Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

General and complete disarmament

The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East

Identical letters dated 27 February 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to send you this letter regarding the danger represented by Israeli nuclear capabilities, on behalf of the Arab States Members and Observers of the United Nations (the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, the Republic of Tunisia, the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Republic of Iraq, the State of Qatar, the State of Kuwait, the Lebanese Republic, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Kingdom of Morocco, the Republic of Yemen, the Sultanate of Oman, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, the Republic of Djibouti, the Union of the Comoros, the Somali Republic, the Kingdom of Bahrain and the State of Palestine (observer)).

1. The Arab States Members and Observers of the United Nations express their deep concern and grave uneasiness over reference made in Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's interview with German television on 11 December 2006 to his country's possession of nuclear weapons, considering it "not to be the first country in the Middle East to produce nuclear weapons" and using the pretext that Israel does not pose a threat to neighbouring States as does Iran.

2. Although this declaration comes as no surprise, in view of the Arab States' and international community's previous knowledge of the almost certain military nature of Israeli nuclear programmes, the significance of this statement is that it constitutes the first Israeli declaration to come from such a high level, and as such represents a new confirmation of international and Arab suspicions regarding Israel's nuclear capabilities.

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3. The Arab States consider Israel's possession of military nuclear capabilities to represent a clear violation of the will of the international community embodied in General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the threat of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, in particular Security Council resolution 487 (1981), which calls upon Israel urgently to place its nuclear facilities under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and notes that Israel has not adhered to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It is also a violation of resolutions on the establishment of a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East, the provisions and objectives of the NPT, and the resolution on the Middle East issued by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. This is in addition to it conflicting with initiatives calling for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, in the Middle East, of which the most recent was the Arab initiative of 2003 which is still in blue before the Security Council.

4. From another perspective, the declaration by the Prime Minister of Israel regarding his country's possession of nuclear weapons highlights how important it is for the various multilateral international forums, above all the General Assembly, the Security Council and the IAEA, to undertake their responsibilities effectively, seriously and without delay, in accordance with relevant resolutions, to confront this grave threat to international and regional security in a way that is reflected in practical steps regarding existing cooperation programmes with Israel in the nuclear area.

5. The declarations by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel and other declarations reconfirm the fears of the States of the region and the entire international community about the danger threatening international security and peace. At the same time, the international community remains powerless to induce Israel to accede to the NPT, to which all the Arab States have acceded, and to place its nuclear facilities under the IAEA comprehensive safeguards system. This reveals clearly the double standard that is being followed in the region in accordance with political interests, which is also reflected by the obstruction of the draft resolution put forward by the Arab Group to the fiftieth session of the IAEA General Conference under this agenda item. This is unacceptable and cannot continue.

6. The Arab States reserve their right to take all necessary measures to deal with the threat represented by Israeli nuclear capacities through the various decision-making agencies of the United Nations and related frameworks.

7. Finally, we ask that the text of this letter be circulated among the Member States as a document of the Security Council, and of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 87 and 90.

(*Signed*) Abdullah Ahmed **Al-Murad**
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Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait
to the United Nations
Chairman of the Arab Group